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France under Louis XV. By JAMES BRECK PERKINS. Boston and New York, Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1897. — xii, 496; xii, 488 pp.

Two volumes on *France under Richelieu and Mazarin* and a third on *France under the Regency* have already made Mr. Perkins known to most readers of general history. Two additional volumes now resume the story, and carry the work on from the ministry of Bourbon to the death of Louis XV. Like the earlier volumes, these on *France under Louis XV* form, not merely a history of France, but also an outline of suggestions on the political history of the chief European states. The intricacies of the foreign complications of France are untangled; the importance of those relations is given due weight; and their development and results are set forth in helpful and intelligible order. Thus, although the author begins by treating successively the condition of France and the ministries of Bourbon and Fleury, he immediately introduces a chapter on the war of the Polish succession; and this is followed by some 200 pages on the war of the Austrian succession and by two chapters on India, the return to more particularly local affairs being effected in the concluding chapter of the volume, on the "reign" of Madame de Pompadour. Likewise, the second volume presents considerable material on the diplomatic revolution of 1756 and the war with Frederick, while a chapter each is devoted to the annexation of Corsica and the first partition of Poland. Parallel with these events are discussed internal affairs, especially the Jesuits and the *Parlements*; while one chapter treats of the administration of Choiseul, and another — possibly little more than a weak interpolation — is devoted to his disgrace. An entertaining conclusion is reached in two chapters on "Intellectual and Social Changes" and "The Influence of Literature."

It is proper, if not inevitable, that in such a work the discussion of Austrian, Polish or Prussian politics should be carried on mainly with reference to their connection with the political affairs of France. Thus the reader is enabled easily to keep in view the relation of events and their proportionate significance. So much being fortunately assured him, his acquaintance with these volumes cannot fail to be of advantage. The amount of his knowledge may not be greatly increased; but he will find that such a rewriting of history, with additions of new material, can be instructive, and that such an attempt at interpretation may be valuable in its criticism and suggestion. Writing like this will serve as a stimulus to the general reader, while from the student it should receive its share of appreciation.

In general, these volumes are similar in character to the earlier works of the same author. There appear no especially striking merits and—considering the plan and purpose of the work—no prominent defects. The material bearing upon the subject seems to have been examined with care and to have been subjected to a judicious selection. The abundant facts have been given a helpful arrangement and, furthermore, have been cast into an attractive form. With all this, the uniform steadiness in the handling of the subject and the conservative tone imparted to the work afford, in these days, something of relief. Whether judged as a literary recast or as a piece of research these volumes may well be shown favor. Detail of judgment may be criticised and construction of facts may be questioned, but the main line of discourse is such as to furnish reading which is straightforward, suggestive and instructive.

The most palpable fault of the volumes is the incompleteness and even uselessness of many citations. To be sure, Mr. Perkins, in his mention of Voltaire, says that his "execution was often imperfect, as are all historical works. . . ." Detailed criticism would thus seem ungenerous, although instances of a rare type of error may be given. Thus, it is stated (II, 173) that in 1763 "Spain ceded to England all her possessions in North America east of the Mississippi." All will not agree that the affair at Minorca was for France "the first victory in the war with England. . . ." Nor do Americans to-day speak of Captain Mahan as one "among English writers." But an extension of such quotations would not impair the value of the work or modify seriously the generally favorable impression which it makes.

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Vincent de Gournay. Par G. SCHELLE. Paris, Guillaumin, 1897. — 300 pp.

This is a disappointing book. From the author of the biography of Du Pont de Nemours and the restorer of the text of Turgot great things were expected. And, indeed, in the 252 exceedingly small pages that are here given to Gournay himself there is a certain amount of new material for which we must be grateful. There seems to be little of Gournay's own writing now in existence, and few fresh particulars to be gleaned about his life ; but what could be got together M. Schelle has now set before us, including a number of important letters and a *mémoire* addressed to the municipal authorities of Lyons concerning the *corporations des gens de métier*. Let us